



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa Fishing Report

Conservation and Recreation



[Top Iowa Fishing Spots for the Week of March 29.](#)

This weekly fishing report is compiled from information gathered from local bait shops, angler creel surveys and county and state parks staff. For current information, contact the district fisheries office at the phone number listed at the end of each district report.

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Spring Urban Trout Stocking Schedule

Experience the thrill of catching a trout this spring at one of our urban trout lakes. Share the fun - invite a kid, your best friend or the whole family to come along.

NORTHWEST

[Black Hawk Lake](#)

The lake is ice free. **Bluegill** - Fair: Use waxworms and crawlers fished under a bobber from the floating dock and along Ice House Point shoreline. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Catch crappie from the floating dock in Town Bay and along Ice House Point shoreline using minnows and crawlers suspended below a bobber.

Brushy Creek Lake

The lake is ice free. More reports will be available as we receive them.

Storm Lake (including Little Storm Lake)

Immediately after ice out is a good time to target channel catfish along shore using cut bait. **Walleye** - Fair: Use twisters, minnows or leeches from shore. Expect walleye shore angling action to pick within the next week with increasing water temperatures.

Look for shore fishing action to pick up as water temperatures slowly warm. More reports will be available as more anglers get out on open water. For more information, contact the Black Hawk District office at 712-657-2638.

Clear Lake

Ice fishing is not recommended.

Shell Rock River (above Greene)

Water levels are rising slowly. Walleye and northern pike are starting to bite.

Winnebago River

Northern pike and walleyes are starting to bite. Try fishing the slack water below a dam or where a creek dumps in to the river. Use live chubs or crank baits.

For information on the lakes and rivers in the north central area, contact the Clear Lake Fish and Wildlife office at 641-357-3517.

East Okoboji Lake

Bluegill - Fair: Bluegill action is reported off the south ramp (Hwy 71) in 8 feet of water. Sorting is needed. Best action is early evening hours. Yellow baas, perch and crappie are also mixed in the catch.

Spirit Lake

Yellow Perch - Fair: Reports of yellow perch action on the south end of the lake. Best action is early morning and evening with a jig tipped with a minnow head. **Black Crappie**- Fair: Report of crappie and bluegill from the Templar Park area.

West Okoboji Lake

Limited fishing activity; the majority of the anglers are focusing on the north end of the lake. Foot traffic only on the Iowa Great Lakes. Access areas are soft with "rubber or water proof boots" needed to get through the slush.

For more information throughout the week, contact the Spirit Lake Fish Hatchery at 712-336-1840.

NORTHEAST

Cedar River (above Nashua)

Open water fishing is around the corner. Large chunks of free-floating ice are causing hazardous boating conditions. **Walleye** - Good: Use a worm hooked in a worm harness or a jig tipped with twister tail fished below the dams. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Anglers fishing below dams are catching catfish using a big hook loaded with nightcrawlers.

Decorah District Streams

Catchable trout stocking starts April 2 – check out [this year's trout stream stocking calendar](#). Plan a trip to your favorite trout stream. Most of snow is gone. Gravel roads and parking areas are rough and mushy as the frost comes out. **Brook**

Trout- Good: Early morning is a good time to catch a brookie. Use a streamer to mimic minnows or subsurface flies like scuds or pheasant tail nymphs. **Brown**

Trout- Good: Melt water and run-off inputs drive Brown Trout into a feeding frenzy. Use small midge, caddis, or flashy streamer patterns. **Rainbow Trout** - Good: Catch a post-spawn Rainbow Trout below a riffle. Float a feathered spinner or crankbait past a hungry mouth and hang on.

Lake Hendricks

Ice fishing not recommended.

Lake Meyer

Ice fishing not recommended. Anglers have not been out.

Upper Iowa River (above Decorah)

Upper Iowa is mostly ice-free. Anglers are finding fish below the dams and in deeper holes. **Walleye** - Good: Use jigs with twister tails and crankbaits. **White Sucker** - Fair: Anglers report suckers are starting to hit.

Volga Lake

Ice fishing not recommended. Open water around edges.

Rain Friday night, turning to snow Saturday. Temperatures in the upper 30s for highs, but dipping below freezing at night. Rivers and streams are fishable. Ice covers most lakes, but it is not safe to walk on. For current fishing information, please call the Decorah Fish Hatchery at 563-382-8324.

Cedar River (Nashua to La Porte City)

Reports of a few walleye being caught on the Cedar River in Black Hawk and Bremer Counties. Anglers have also been successful on northern pike in Black Hawk County. **Walleye** – Fair: Cast and retrieve a jig and plastic tipped with a minnow;

concentrate on areas of deeper open water. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Float a live chub or shiner under a bobber in slack water areas off of the main current break.

Manchester District Streams

Trout Streams are in excellent condition. Use streamers, jigs, and crankbaits. With spring like temperatures, there have been good afternoon hatches. **Brown Trout** - Good: Browns can be easier to catch on days where the water color is stained. **Rainbow Trout**– Slow. **Brook Trout** – Slow.

Maquoketa River (above Monticello)

There have been a few reports of anglers catching walleye on the Maquoketa River; river levels remain good for walleye angling opportunities. **Walleye** - Fair: Cast and retrieve a jig and plastic tipped with a minnow; concentrate on areas of deeper open water.

Shell Rock River (Greene to Shell Rock)

There have been a few reports of anglers catching walleye on the Shell Rock River; river levels remain good for walleye angling opportunities. **Walleye** - Fair: Cast and retrieve a jig and plastic tipped with a minnow; concentrate on areas of deeper open water.

Wapsipinicon River (Tripoli to Troy Mills)

There have been reports of anglers catching walleye on the Wapsipinicon River in Buchanan County. **Walleye** - Fair: Cast and retrieve a jig and plastic tipped with a minnow; concentrate on areas of deeper open water.

Eastern Iowa rivers are open; open water angling opportunities are available on the Cedar, Shell Rock, Wapsipinicon and Maquoketa. Area trout streams are in excellent condition. Anglers are beginning to catch walleye as the spring walleye spawn approaches. Call the N.E. Iowa district office at 563-927-3276 for more information.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

Mississippi River Pool 9

River level at Lansing is 8.21 feet and is expected to rise slowly over the next week. Many overwintering fish are still in backwaters, but starting to move out as temperatures warm. **Walleye** - Good: Walleye are a couple of weeks away from spawning and should be actively feeding. Troll three way rigs with crankbaits. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Perch bite is getting better; many 10+ inch fish are being reported. **Sauger** - Good: Sauger bite is picking up as fish are in pre-spawn feeding mode. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Pike should be spawning soon, but some nice pike have been caught on live bait.

Mississippi River Pool 10

River level at Lynxville has risen about a foot at 16.2 feet and is expected to rise slowly

and level off over the next week. Many overwintering fish are still in backwaters, but starting to move out as temperatures warm. Tailwaters are concentrating a lot of active fish right now. **Walleye**- Good: Walleye are a couple of weeks away from spawning and the bite is picking up in the tailwaters. Troll three way rigs with crankbaits. **Yellow Perch**- Good: Perch bite is getting better along the shorelines in the tailwaters; many 10+ inch fish are being reported. **Sauger** - Good: Sauger bite is picking up in the tailwaters as fish are in pre-spawn feeding mode. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Pike should be spawning soon, but some nice pike have been caught on live bait.

Mississippi River Pool 11

River level at Guttenberg has risen about a foot at 7.7 feet is expected to rise slowly over the next week. Many overwintering fish are still in backwaters, but starting to move out as temperatures warm. Tailwaters are concentrating a lot of active fish right now. **Walleye** - Fair: Walleye are a couple of weeks away from spawning and the bite is picking up in the tailwaters. Troll three way rigs with crankbaits. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Perch bite is getting better along the shorelines in the tailwaters; many 10+ inch fish are being reported. **Sauger** - Good: Sauger bite is picking up in the tailwaters as fish are in pre-spawn feeding mode. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Pike should be spawning soon, but some nice pike have been caught on live bait.

Upper Mississippi River levels are slowly starting to rise as the spring thaw continues. Most backwater areas are now free of ice with water temperatures slowly climbing into the lower 40's. Spring fishing is starting to get better as water temperatures warm up.

Mississippi River Pool 12

Water levels are rising and are 7.3 feet at the Dubuque Lock and the RR bridge is 9.7 feet. The water will continue to rise this upcoming week. The channel water temperature is around 40 degrees. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Several reports scattered around the pool, but mostly from the tailwater. **Northern Pike** - Fair: More reports of northern pike being picked up by tailwater anglers. Some of the melted backwaters also may see some pike angling. **Walleye** - Good: Some scattered reports of walleyes being taken in the tailwaters and more along wing dams. Some nice slot fish are being seen every week.

Mississippi River Pool 13

Water levels at Bellevue are 7.9 feet and are rising. Both Bellevue City ramp and the DNR ramp are open, but no courtesy dock available yet at the DNR ramp. Paddlefish season is now underway. Please review the [Paddlefishing regulations](#). The channel water temperature is around 40 degrees. **Yellow Perch** - Good: Yellow perch of all sizes are being caught in the tailwaters. **Paddlefish** - Slow: Some paddlefish were caught early; now only an occasional fish is reported. **Sauger** - Good: Hit or miss. Some good reports of nice sauger. Most are being taken on minnow rigs. **Walleye** – Good: Nice slot

fish still being reported. Minnow and jig or pulling crank baits are the most popular strategies. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Tailwater anglers report catching a few northern pike. They will be preparing to spawn soon. They are a little late in spawning this year and as of yet have not spent their eggs.

[Mississippi River Pool 14](#)

Water levels are rising and are 7.8 feet at Fulton, 10.8 feet at Camanche and 5.7 feet at LeClaire. This is up a bit from last week. The water temperature is around 42 degrees. Paddlefish season is underway; please review the [Paddlefishing regulations](#). Ramps are open and ready for use. **Paddlefish** - Slow: Good fishing seen early in the season; it has slowed greatly. **Sauger** - Fair: Lots of good reports mixed with some anglers having troubles catching sauger. Most anglers are using minnow rigs. **Walleye** - Fair: Not many being caught, but reports of some very nice sized fish.

[Mississippi River Pool 15](#)

Water levels are falling and are 8.8 feet at Rock Island. This is up from last week; conditions should remain favorable for angling this week.

River levels are rising slowly throughout the district. Water levels are still very conducive to angling! Some ice is still reported in Pool 12 in a few backwaters. If you have any angling questions, please contact the Bellevue Fisheries Station 563-872-4976.

[Mississippi River Pool 16](#)

Tailwater stage is 8.05 feet at Lock and Dam 15 in the Quad Cities and is rising. Tailwater fishing is being reported as slow. **Sauger** - Slow: A few saugers are being caught in Sylvan Slough. Try fishing with jigs and minnows or pulling three-way rigs with stick baits. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Fishing has been slow in Sunset Marina for crappies. Try fishing with minnows under a bobber.

[Mississippi River Pool 17](#)

Tailwater stage is 6.87 feet at Lock and Dam 16 in Muscatine and is rising. Tailwater fishing for walleyes and saugers is being reported as slow. **Sauger** - Slow: Try fishing with jigs and minnows or pulling three-way rigs and stick baits. **White Crappie** - Slow: A few crappies are being caught in Big Timber. Try fishing with minnows or plastics around brush piles.

[Mississippi River Pool 18](#)

Tailwater stage is 8.45 feet at Lock and Dam 17 at New Boston and is rising. We have not received any fishing information for this pool this week.

[Mississippi River Pool 19](#)

Tailwater stage is 5.17 feet at Lock and Dam 19 above Burlington and is rising. We have not received any fishing information for this pool this week.

River stages have been on the rise the past few days with the recent rains and snow melt. Main channel water temperature is around 42 degrees. Tailwater fishing has been reported as being slow. If you have questions on fishing Pools 16-19, contact the Fairport Fish Hatchery at 563-263-5062.

SOUTHEAST

Big Hollow Lake

Not a lot of angler activity on the lake. Water temperature has gotten up to the low 40's during some of the warmer days. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: A few bass are starting to be picked up in the shallower water close to the deeper water. The bass are staying just at the edge of the deeper water most of the time.

Environmental Discovery Park North Pond

The trout stocked last Friday were a little slow to bite, but started to bite after about 1/2 hour. Still plenty of them left to be caught. **Rainbow Trout** - Excellent: This small pond with easy access makes it easy to move around and find the trout. Concentrate your efforts on the corners of the pond. **Brook Trout** – Excellent.

Lake Belva Deer

Water temperature is hovering around 40 degrees. The weather seems to be keeping all but the die-hard anglers off the water. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: A few bass are being caught in deeper water out among the flooded trees.

Lake Darling

Very little angler activity. The docks at the boat ramps are in. Water temperature is up to 40 degrees in the afternoons, upper 30's most of the rest of the time. **Largemouth Bass**- Slow: A few small bass are being caught. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Anglers are starting to catch a few crappies.

Lake Geode

Drained for the renovation project. With the warmer weather, the bottom of the lake will thaw out and get soft again; use caution when walking around on the bottom of the lake.

Lake of the Hills

When the weather gets nice, get out to Lake of the Hills and catch some really nice trout. **Brook Trout** - Excellent: The brook trout were the first to bite after they got off the stocking truck and should still be biting. Work out to about 4 foot of water; key in on the stumps and logs out at that depth. **Rainbow Trout** - Excellent: The rainbows were a little slower than the brook trout to start hitting, but about 1/2 hour in they picked up. Nice size fish averaging a little over 1/2 pound each.

Lost Grove Lake

Water temperature is in the upper 30's. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Work the flooded trees in shallow water during the sunny warmer days and out deeper around the trees during the rest of the time. **Black Crappie** - Slow: Crappies are still hanging out around the flooded timber in deeper water.

Wilson Lake

A good number of anglers were out last Friday for the Spring Trout Release; there are still plenty of trout left to catch. Both Brook and Rainbows were stocked. **Brook Trout** - Excellent: The trout are still going to be in pretty shallow. Look for them around the brush piles, stumps, and culvert piles that you can see from shore. **Rainbow Trout** - Excellent: Work the shallower habitat and you should be able to find the rainbows.

For more information on the fishing at the above lakes and rivers, contact the Lake Darling Fisheries Office at 319-694-2430.

Cedar River (La Porte City to Cedar Rapids)

Benton County has had the best reports so far. **Walleye** - Good: Jigs and crankbaits work well. **Northern Pike** - Fair: Some nice fish are being picked up.

Central Park Lake

The lake is currently drained and undergoing a lake renovation project. It will be completed this spring.

Coralville Reservoir

The lake is at normal spring pool of 679.4 feet. At this level, boating above the Lake Macbride Park ramp is not advised. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Some fish have been caught on cut shad or shad guts under the 965/380 bridges and in the channel of the main lake.

Diamond Lake

The boat dock is always in. **Black Crappie** - Fair: Fish jigs over brush piles. Most fish are 8-9 inches.

Iowa Lake (Iowa County)

The water temperature is hovering around 40 degrees. **Black Crappie** – Fair. **Largemouth Bass** – Fair.

Kent Park Lake

The lake is currently drained for a lake renovation project. It is scheduled to be completed by the spring of 2019.

Lake Macbride

The lake temperature is around 40 degrees. The boat docks are in, but the fish cleaning

stations are not available yet. **Walleye** – Slow. Black Crappie – Slow.

[Otter Creek Lake](#)

The boat dock and T-dock at the north end are in. No fishing reports are available.

[Pleasant Creek Lake](#)

The lake is still 8 feet low from the restoration project. The main ramp is open and the boat dock is in. Use caution when launching and boating at this water level. Water temperatures this week were in the low 40's. **Walleye** - Slow: Some fish are being caught in deep water. Fish taken from 20+ feet often do not survive as their air bladders expand out of their mouth. **Muskellunge** - Slow: A couple fish were reported this past week.

[Prairie Park Fishery](#)

1500 trout will be stocked here this Saturday, March 31st at 10 a.m. Iowa residents and nonresidents who are required to have a fishing license must pay the Trout Fee to fish for or possess trout. Exception: Anglers under 16 years old may possess or fish for trout without having paid the Trout Fee if they fish with a properly licensed adult who has paid the Trout Fee and together their combined limit is 5. **Brook Trout** – Good. **Rainbow Trout** – Good.

[Terry Trueblood Lake](#)

2000 trout will be stocked here on Friday, March 30th at 11 a.m. Last weekend's stocking was cancelled due to weather. Iowa residents and nonresidents who are required to have a fishing license must pay the Trout Fee to fish for or possess trout. Exception: Anglers under 16 years old may possess or fish for trout without having paid the Trout Fee if they fish with a properly licensed adult who has paid the Trout Fee and together their combined limit is 5. **Brook Trout** – Good. **Rainbow Trout** – Good.

[Wapsipinicon River \(Troy Mills to Oxford Junction\)](#)

Walleye - Fair: A few fish are being caught on jigs below the dams.

For more information, contact the Lake Macbride Fisheries Station at 319-624-3615.

[Lake Sugema](#)

Try using cut bait for channel catfish.

[Lake Wapello](#)

Use cut bait on the windblown shorelines to catch channel catfish this time of year.

[Ottumwa Park Pond South](#)

Trout are scheduled to be stocked this Friday, March 30th at Noon. There will be a family trout fishing event this Saturday, March 31st from 8:00 a.m. until noon.

Rathbun Reservoir

The current lake level is 903.66 msl. Normal operating elevation is 904.0 msl. Lake Rathbun has zebra mussels, so make sure to properly drain, clean, and dry equipment before transporting to another water body. The campgrounds are closed. **Channel Catfish** - Fair: Use shad sides or cut bait on the windblown shorelines.

Red Haw Lake

Try cut bait for channel catfish. Target shorelines with the wind blowing in.

The district includes Mahaska, Lucas, Wayne, Monroe, Appanoose, Wapello, Davis and Van Buren counties. Contact the Rathbun Fish Hatchery at 641-647-2406 with questions about fishing in south central Iowa.

SOUTHWEST

Ada Hayden Heritage Park Lake

Rainbow Trout - Fair: Cast small in-line spinners, spoons, twister tail or tube jigs and live minnows or waxworms under a bobber. Find trout in the north and south sections of the lake; move around to find the schools.

Banner Lake (south)

Rainbow Trout - Good: The spring trout stocking will be Saturday April 7th at 11:00 a.m. Use inline spinners, small casting spoons, 1/8 ounce or smaller jigs with twister tails, and waxworms or minnows under a bobber.

Big Creek Lake

Walleye - Fair: Some anglers are starting to catch walleyes off points and rip rap shorelines in the mid and lower lake. They are being caught on jig and twister tails, jig and minnow, or slow trolling minnow rigs.

Des Moines River (Saylorville to Red Rock)

Walleye - Fair: It is a good time to fish below the Saylorville and downtown dams. Jigs tipped with twister tails and/or minnows work best. The best walleye fishing will be through April if flows do not get too high. **Channel Catfish** - Good: Catfishing with dead shad has been good in the river from Saylorville through downtown Des Moines.

For more information on Central Iowa lakes and rivers, contact Andy Otting or Ben Dodd at 515-432-2823.

Farm Creek Lake

Farm Creek Lake will offer good early spring crappie fishing in the upper end as water

temperatures warm.

[Lake Anita](#)

As water temperatures warm, crappies will move into the pontoon area of the lake.

[Lake Manawa](#)

Warm sunny days offer good crappie fishing in the canals. Lake Manawa is also a good destination for early spring catfishing. **White Crappie** - Slow: A few crappies are being caught in the canals. Warm sunny days are best. **Channel Catfish** - No Report: Fish the windy shoreline with shad sides or cut bait. Channel catfish in Manawa are all sizes.

[Meadow Lake](#)

Meadow has a good population of 10 inch black crappie.

[Prairie Rose Lake](#)

Prairie Rose will offer good panfishing this spring. The lake has quality sized bluegills and crappies are acceptable size. Target the brush piles.

[Viking Lake](#)

Find early spring crappies in the campground arm and behind the pontoon area. A few bass are being caught in the deeper brush piles. **Largemouth Bass** - Slow: Jig plastics in deeper brush piles.

There has been little fishing activity this week in the southwest district. For more information, contact the Cold Springs office at 712-769-2587.

[Green Valley Lake](#)

Largemouth Bass - Slow: Catch largemouth bass up to 19 inches using crankbaits fished along the silt dams and rocky shoreline areas.

[Little River Watershed Lake](#)

Walleye - Slow: Catch walleyes up to 22 inches with jigs tipped with a minnow fished along the roadbed.

Lakes in the Mount Ayr district are 100% ice free. Water temperature in most district lakes is about 43 degrees F. Limited fishing activity observed this week. For more information, please call the Mount Ayr Fisheries office at 641-464-3108.